

Today, I am filing a resolution calling for the Department of Justice to appoint an independent counsel to investigate whether the President or his staff directed, or knowingly allowed, Customs and Border Protection to violate court orders designed to freeze the implementation of the January 27 Muslim travel ban executive order.

I strongly disagree with the contents of the executive order in question. It targets people based on their religion, and it instilled fear across the country. It violates our Nation's values and the idea that, in America, people aren't judged by the color of their skin or by the religion they practice but, instead, by their character. This plays right into the hands of terrorists who would use it as a recruiting tool around the world to inflame those who seek to do Americans harm at home and abroad.

Let me be clear, though. My disapproval of the President's unfair executive order did not motivate the introduction of this resolution. This resolution concerns only the President's adherence to a judicial order. The question is whether he knowingly allowed Customs and Border Patrol to violate that order.

I hope the investigation will find that the President and his administration fully complied with court orders concerning his executive order. However, if President Trump overstepped and purposely violated the judiciary, the Congress should censure him. If, after censure, the President again disregards our Nation's systems of checks and balances and separation of powers, the Congress should take steps to remove him from office.

During his campaign and in the time since his election, President Trump has promised to be a law-and-order President. Well, the court system is central to upholding the law and ensuring order in our Nation. It represents the way that we, as Americans, peacefully and civilly resolve disputes. Respect for the judiciary isn't just a constitutional requirement for the President, it is a requirement for all of us.

President Trump is no stranger to our judicial system. He spent his career using the courts to sue his foes and settle his broken promises. Now it is time for him to keep the promise he made to the American people when he took the oath of office last month. He must follow the law and abide by our Constitution.

Defending our democracy requires vigilance and stern action. Our Founders wisely designed our government so that no court, no Congress, and no President could gain a dangerous amount of power. If we in Congress cede our responsibility to keep the executive in check, we risk being complicit in creating a constitutional crisis.

My resolution seeks to defend our Republic and our precious founding documents. Each of us in Congress swore to support the Constitution.

I urge all Members of this body to put country before party and vote in favor of this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members to refrain from improper references to the President.

COMPETING VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. McCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, our Nation has come to a crossroads between two competing visions for the future that don't easily reconcile. At such times as these, emotions run very high.

The good news is that our institutions are the best ever designed to resolve such political disputes. And it comes down to this: In other countries, the government is the sovereign and rights flow from it to the people; here in America, the people are sovereign.

In America, the sovereign does not govern; it hires help to govern during an election. In between elections, the sovereign people debate how the hired help is doing. That is the real debate, the one that goes on every day over backyard fences and family dinner tables wherever Americans gather. After that family discussion, we decide whether to fire the hired help or keep it for another cycle. As long as we are with each other and not shouting at each other, our system works very well.

Once in our history, we stopped talking with each other. That was the election of 1860. That election was marked not by reconciliation, but by rioting in those regions where the opposition dominated. The opposition party refused to accept the legitimacy of the election itself. Political leaders pledged resistance to the new administration by any means necessary. They asserted the doctrine of nullification, the notion that any dissenting State or city that opposed Federal laws could simply refuse to obey them. Finally came the secession movement, the ultimate rejection of our Constitution and our rule of law.

Have we not started down that road once again?

Even before the election, we saw violent mobs carrying foreign flags physically attack Americans for the sole reason that they wanted to attend a political rally for the candidate of their choice. The violence in Berkeley last week warns us that this behavior is rising.

Some prominent elected officials are again asserting the doctrine of nullification by declaring that their jurisdictions are sanctuaries where Federal immigration laws will simply be ignored. In California, the formal secession movement is supported by nearly a third of the population of my own suffering State.

Now, I held more than a hundred townhall meetings in my district throughout the last 8 years, spanning the entire life of the Tea Party and the Occupy Wall Street movements. Through all of these heated debates, the police have never had to intervene, until this weekend in Roseville, when the Roseville Police Department determined that the size and temper of the crowd required a police escort to protect me as I left the venue.

□ 1030

Now, the vast majority of the people attempting to attend this meeting were peaceful, decent, law-abiding folks who sincerely opposed Donald Trump, and they wanted to make their views known to their elected representative. But, there was also a well-organized element that came to disrupt, and disrupt they did.

Now, in the last four elections, our country has turned dramatically away from the left. The Democrats have lost 67 House seats, 12 Senate seats, 10 Governors, more than 900 State legislative seats, and now the Presidency. That happened, in large part, because those who opposed their policies talked with their neighbors about the future of our country.

Instead of pursuing that successful example, the radical left seeks not to persuade their fellow citizens by reason but rather to impose its views by bullying, insulting, intimidating, and, as in Berkeley, by physically attacking their fellow citizens. This is not a tactic likely to change minds, but, if it persists, it could tear down the very institutions of democracy that have served us so well for so long.

I would ask the many sincere citizens who have been caught up with this disruptive element: Do you object because the President is breaking his promises, or do you object because he is keeping them?

If your objection is because the President is keeping the promises he made to the American people, is that not because the sovereign people, your neighbors and fellow countrymen, directed these changes over the last four elections?

If you love our country, and that love for our country is greater than your hatred of our President, I implore you to engage in a civil discussion with your fellow citizens. That is what true democracy looks like.

OUR CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Speaker, the Founding Fathers believed that our constitutional system of checks and balances and separation of powers were the people's primary protection for their liberty, and they saw the usurpation of authority by a single branch to be dangerous to the constitutional system.